

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5239

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Early Learning & K-12 Education, February 1, 2007  
Ways & Means, March 5, 2007

**Title:** An act relating to a segmented mathematics alternative assessment.

**Brief Description:** Requiring implementation of a segmented mathematics alternative assessment.

**Sponsors:** Senators Tom, McAuliffe, Marr, Shin and Keiser.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/17/07, 2/01/07 [DPS-WM, DNP].

Ways & Means: 2/12/07, 3/05/07 [DPS(EDU), w/oRec].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5239 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Tom, Vice Chair; Clements, Eide, Hobbs, Kauffman, Oemig, Rasmussen and Weinstein.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Holmquist, Ranking Minority Member, Brandland and Hewitt.

**Staff:** Susan Mielke (786-7422)

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5239 as recommended by Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Pridemore, Vice Chair, Operating Budget; Brandland, Carrell, Fairley, Hatfield, Hobbs, Keiser, Oemig, Rasmussen, Regala, Roach, Rockefeller and Tom.

**Minority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation. Signed by Senators Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Hewitt, Honeyford, Parlette and Schoesler.

**Staff:** Bryon Moore (786-7726)

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Background:** In 1993, the Legislature required the development of the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) which are what students should know and be able to do. EALRs have been developed in reading, writing, communication, mathematics, science, social studies, arts, and health & fitness.

The Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) assesses the EALRs in reading, writing, and math. In 2006, the Legislature approved alternative assessments to the WASL. A student who has not met the standards must retake the WASL prior to accessing an alternative assessment. Additionally, students must have regular attendance and participate in assistance programs.

The 2006 supplemental budget provided \$2.3 million for the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to develop a new tenth grade assessment that presents the mathematics EALRs in segments for assessment. The new assessment must be comparable in content and rigor to the tenth grade WASL when all the segments are considered together. Additionally, the new assessment must be reliable and valid. SPI anticipates that the new mathematics assessment will be available to students in the 2007-08 school year.

SPI is also developing a segmented math course. SPI intends to have the development and training on the new class and assessments completed by June 30, 2007.

**Summary of Bill:** SPI must implement an alternative assessment option for mathematics that presents the mathematics EALRs in segments for assessment. The new assessment must be comparable in content and rigor to the tenth grade WASL when all the segments are considered together. Additionally, the new assessment must be reliable and valid. Finally, the assessment must be usable to determine a student's academic performance level.

**EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY RECOMMENDED SUBSTITUTE AS PASSED COMMITTEE (Early Learning & K-12 Education):** Students will not be required to retake the Washington Assessment of Student Learning as a prerequisite before taking the segmented math alternative assessment. The scoring of the segmented math assessment will be scored by teachers trained by the Office of SPI or using electronic means and returned to the school within three weeks.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Early Learning & K-12 Education):** PRO: Most of the approved alternative assessments target students who score within Level 2 on the WASL. This bill targets Level 1 students. To get the Level 1 kids to Level 3 and meeting state standards is like climbing Mount Rainier; but inch by inch, it is a cinch. Everyone has gaps and holes in their learning and this will help fill those. It will allow students to start where they are because the mathematics concepts are broken down into doable, focused segments beginning at the sixth grade level. This gives Level 1 kids hope and a pathway to meet the state standard. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction is developing a

segmented math course to correspond with the segmented assessments. This connects the assessment with the instruction which is a good idea.

OTHER: Increasing the number of alternatives may not be the solution to fix our broken assessment system because teachers are already overworked. This alternative looks positive but there is the same potential to become complex and cumbersome for educators, just like the other alternatives. Students should not have to fail the WASL twice before accessing this alternative.

**Persons Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education):** PRO: Senator Rodney Tom, prime sponsor; Joe Willhoft, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Barbara Mertens, Washington Association of School Administration.

OTHER: Wendy Rader-Konofalski, Washington Education Association.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means):** PRO: Most of the approved alternative assessments target students who score within Level 2 on the WASL. This bill targets Level 1 students. This approach just plain makes sense to assist students not meeting state standards in math. The funding required to implement the segmented math assessment is already accounted for in the Governor's proposed budget.

OTHER: While the segmented alternative assessments is a good idea, it needs to be fully funded. The real cost is between ten to thirty-five million dollars for the courses, the professional development, and other implementation requirements.

**Persons Testifying (Ways & Means):** PRO: Senator Tom, prime sponsor; Jennifer Priddy, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Barbara Mertens, Washington Association of School Administrators.

OTHER: Wendy Rader-Konofalski, Washington Education Association.